DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 194 116 IR 009 018

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TITLE The Undergraduate Library: Lamont and the American Experience.
PUB DATE 79
NOTE 27p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College Libraries; *Construction Programs; Higher Education; *History; Library Expenditures; *Library Facilities; Library Planning; *Undergraduate Students
IDENTIFIERS *Harvard University MA; Undergraduate Libraries

ABSTRACT

This review of the literature on undergraduate libraries, the historical context from which they arose, and their status at the end of the 1970's points out that a long tradition of lack of concern for undergraduate bibliographical needs was broken dramatically in 1949 by the construction of Lamont Library, the Harvard undergraduate facility. Although designed to solve problems unique to Harvard, Lamont was an exemplary construction that soon captured the imagination of the academic library world. It became the model for a rash of new libraries aimed at satisfying "unique" undergraduate needs. These libraries proliferated during the 1950's and 1960's, a period of accelerated growth in academe. By the 1970's, however, the general financial retrenchment of American colleges and universities had virtually halted new construction. Further, the thesis that presumed the needs of undergraduates to be somehow "different," as well as the advisability of facilities effectively segregating them from the rest of the academic community, came under attack in the professional literature. Few undergraduate libraries were built during this period and several were closed or converted to other uses. A bibliography of 24 references is included. (Author)

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THE UNDERGRADUATE LIBRARY:

LAMONT AND THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

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1979

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ABSTRACT:

This paper reviews the literature on undergraduate libraries, the historical context from which they arose, and their status at the end of the 1970s. In 1949, a long tradition of lack of concern for undergraduate bibliographical needs was broken dramatically by the construction of Lamont Library, the Harvard undergraduate facility. Although designed to solve problems unique to Harvard, Lamont was an exemplary construction that soon captured the imagination of the academic library world. It became the model for a rash of new libraries aimed at satisfying "unique" undergraduate needs. These libraries proliferated during the 1950s and 1960s, a period of accelerated growth in academe. By the 1970s, however, the general financial retrenchment of American colleges and universities had virtually halted new construction. Further, the thesis that presumed the needs of undergraduates to be somehow "different" as well as the advisability of facilities effectively segregating them from the rest of the academic community came under attack in the professional literature. Few undergraduate libraries were built during this period and several closed or were converted to other uses.

OCT 2 3 1980

The long-standing tradition of lack of concern for undergraduate library services in our universities was dramatically broken by the construction of the Lamont Library at Harvard in 1949. Both Lamont and the other separately housed undergraduate facilities which followed it in rapid succession during the post-war era may be defined as differing from the traditional research library in at least six basic ways: 1.) Undergraduate libraries provide open access to the collection; 2.) they centralize and simplify services to undergraduates; 3.) they provide a carefully selected core collection of books deemed important for a liberal education as well as make available adequate copies of required course texts and other readings; 4.) they are designed and staffed to serve as an instructional tool to prepare undergraduates in the use of larger and more complex research collections; 5.) they provide services additional to those provided by the research library; and 6.) they are constructed with undergraduate habits of use in mind.[1]

This brief paper will attempt to explore the historical context out of which the undergraduate library arose, primarily by looking at the history of library service to Harvard undergraduates, well-documented by Keyes D. Metcalf and others. The story of neglect traced here appears to have been typical of many other American universities as well. Wagman notes that by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the highest priorities were assigned to acquiring and orgnizing large research collections and "to the service of recondite scholarship."[2] The construction of monumental research

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[1]Irene Braden Hoadley, The Undergraduate Library--The First Twenty Years (San Diego, Calif.: California University, San Diego, 1970.) Available on ERIC: Ed 042 478.

[2]Frederick H. Wagman, "The Undergraduate Library of the University of Michigan," College and Research Libraries, XX (May, 1959), 179.

libraries to house these burgeoning collections and to serve the needs of intensified graduate education continued into the 1940s and codified the emphasis upon the scholar at the expense of the undergraduate. The latter was further alienated by closed stacks, too few copies of needed materials, enormous and complex card catalogs, and inadequate, often condenscending, service. Prior to the construction of Lamont, certain efforts were made to ease the situation of the undergraduate, viz., reserve book collections, additional study halls, house libraries, separate collections (often housed in a room of the main library), and divisional arrangement of the research collection. Ultimately, of these expedients all failed to meet adequately the needs of the lower classmen, at least on the larger university campus. Additionally, the situation forced an over-dependence on the part of the faculty on the lecture and textbook method of teaching, making efforts to move away from this traditional approach most difficult.

Another major factor faced, if not by Harvard by many public and private universities, was increased enrollment, particularly at the end of the second world war. The need to cope with space problems created by returning veterans as well as by the increased scope and complexity of the research collections led to rapid acceptance of tne concept of the separately housed undergraduate library as panacea. Lamont Library, the great undergraduate facility built by the Harvard Corporation in 1949, was seminal in the history of American academic libraries, serving both as prototype and rationalization for the rash of undergraduate libraries constructed on American campuses during the past thirty years. The high level of funding enjoyed by the academic community in the 1950s and 1960s permitted the construction of many more such separate undergraduate facilities. However, these later libraries were not

confined to the large research oriented campuses for which they appear to be most appropriate. As the idea became increasingly fashionable, small schools with little graduate or research emphasis adopted them as well. The success of the undergraduate library on these smaller campuses was, as we shall see, quite limited.

The short shrift often received by the undergraduate in his competition with faculty and graduate students for library resources on the large university campus of today is prefigured quite early on in the annals of librarianship. Wagman has made reference to a proposal made by Thomas James, in 1608 the recently appointed head of Bodley's Library, for a separate library for undergraduates. James' proposal was rejected by Sir Thomas Bodley who wrote him in the following terms:

> Your deuise for a Librarie for the younger sort, will have many great exceptions, one of special force. That there must be an other keeper ordeined for that place. And where you mention the younger sort, I knowe what bookes should be bought for them, but the elder as well (as) the yonguer, may have often occasion to looke vpon them: and if there were any suche, they can not require so great a rowme. In effect, to my understanding there is much to be saied against it, as vndoubtedly your self will readily finde, vpon further consideration.[3]

Keyes D. Metcalf, Harvard Librarian during the period of the conception and execution of the Lamont Library, has traced the relationship of the undergraduate to the Harvard libraries since 1765.[4] At that date, the library occupied a portion of the second floor of Harvard Hall. Although it appears that "a part of the Library (was) kept distinct from the rest as a smaller

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[3]Frederick H. Wagman, "The Case for the Separate Undergraduate Library," College and Research Libraries, XVII (March, 1956), 150.

[4]Hughes D. Metcalf, "The Undergraduate and the Harvard Library, 1765-1879," Harvard Library Bulletin, I (Winter, 1947).

Library for the more common use of the college," it was only that year that the privilege of borrowing a book was granted not only to senior, but to junior sophisters as well. In 1773, an additional "service" was extended in the form of a twenty-seven page catalog of books "for the more frequent Use of Harvard men who have not yet been invested with the Degree of Bachelor in Arts." It was justified as a supplement to the complete library catalog, as the latter included books "above the Comprehension of Younger Students."

In 1810, freshmen were admitted to the library for the first time. This was a period of rather freer use of the facilities by undergraduates which soon gave rise to concern. In 1813, Andrews Norton, Harvard Librarian, was asked to comment upon the situation by President Kirkland. His reply makes his position abundantly clear: The preservation of rare and valuable books "for occasional use by those who will use them carefully," is an "essentially distinct" function from that of providing "common books for circulation among the students," many of which we must expect to be destroyed "in a short course of years." Further, he felt these functions "ought not to be confounded in a single collection ..."[5] This portrait of the library as an elite institution and the librarian as custodian charged with protecting a cultural heritage which was made available quite parsimoniously to a limited clientele, appears to have been an accurate one for the period.

The Library moved to Gore Hall in 1841, but no additional space was provided. Student dissatisfaction was summarized in a letter to Harvard President Edward Everett by a member of the graduating class of 1846. In it, the writer expresses concern over short and inconvenient hours of admission (which, during one term of his junior year, were effectively reduced to two

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[5] Ibid., 32-35.

per week); the inability to use the library's seven or eight large catalogs undisturbed for more than a few minutes; and, humiliation at the hands of jealous officers charged with retrieving books from the closed stacks. The letter calls for free stack access, a gesture of consideration and good will toward the undergraduate that the writer feels would compensate "the losses under the most liberal estimates of damage ... by the increased good accomplished ..." Metcalf notes that the picture painted by the complainant "was one that could have been duplicated in most mid-nineteenth century American college and university libraries."[6] The letter to Everett makes clear that this was a period of continuing distress over restrictive policies toward borrowers and inadequacies in the collection. "But in all this there is little indication that the University or the Library staff were greatly worried about the Library service provided for the undergraduate except in a negative manner."[7]

In the 1870s, university collections began to expand rapidly and librarians began to compete in developing strong research collections--the criteria by which excellence was to be judged.[8] The Harvard Library collection grew from 414,215 books and pamphlets in 1877, to 3,863,150 in 1937.[9] The advantages of a stronger collection, however, were offset by increased difficulties of use. A variety of methods were developed both by faculty and by students to cope with this situation, including subscription libraries organized and managed by the students themselves, development of the reserved book

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[6] Ibid., 47.

[7] Ibid., 49.

[8] Elizabeth Mills, "The Separate Undergraduate Library," College and Research Libraries, XXIX (March, 1968), 144-156.

[9] Robert W. Lovett, "The Undergraduate and the Harvard Library, 1877-1937," Harvard Library Bulletin, I (Spring, 1947).

system, and classroom and laboratory libraries. Student complaints, however, were to continue. University administrators hoped that the construction, in 1915, of the new library building, Widener, would meet the needs of both scholars and undergraduates. However, "it was inconceivable that the Harvard Library should not be a great scholarly library; all its past history pointed to that goal,"[10] and although numerous student library services were consolidated in the new building, neither the space problem, which had been acute, nor the basic problem of adequate and satisfactory service to undergraduates was resolved.

Library expansion in the 1920s began to force undergraduate student facilities out of Widener, moreover. In 1926, the McKinlock Hall library for freshmen was opened. (It was later transferred to the Union.) The complaint now was raised that freshmen had become satisfied with the Union facility and were ignorant of the joys of Widener.[11] Nonetheless, in 1930-1931, seven House libraries were opened with collections of from seven to ten thousand volumes to serve the upperclassmen, many of whom not unexpectedly came to prefer their club-like atmosphere to the more austere Widener.[12] What is clear is that neither the enormity of the Widener collection and the expansive nature of that great facility, nor the other diverse and decentralized services available on the campus, were satisfactory either to the undergraduates themselves or to the library administrators. Metcalf summarized the situation as it stood in 1932 (indeed, as it remained until the opening of Lamont in 1949). The available undergraduate library services at Harvard fell into

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[10] Ibid., 232.

[11] Ibid., 235.

[12] Keyes D. Metcalf, "The Undergraduate and the Harvard Library, 1937-1947," Harvard Library Bulletin, I (Autumn, 1947).

four categories and represented a most widely dispersed collection:

1.) Those in the Harry Elkins Widener Memorial Library, which housed the larger part of the central collection.

2.) The reserve book reading rooms and collections that represented primarily an overflow from Widener, and were found in Boyston Hall and in the Union.

3.) The House libraries.

4.) Other libraries, special and departmental, throughout the University which provided a greater or lesser amount of service to the undergraduate students.[13]

What might have been, in a lesser school than Harvard, an embarassment of riches, was deemed inadequate by Metcalf. He outlined the problm in the following manner:

1.) Experience had shown that the very great scattering of reading room facilities reduced the use of the library by the undergraduate ... (and) required a much larger staff ...

2.) A student at Amherst, Dartmouth, Bowdoin, Oberlin, or one of the better women's colleges had at his or her disposal a much larger and better collection of books than had the Harvard undergraduate ...

3.) Lack of freedom of access by the undergraduate to the main collection at Widener ... (with its catalog of some 5,000,000 cards) whose complexities of arrangement ... presented difficulties even to the faculty and staff ...

4.) The attempt to combine the library services for undergraduate and

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[13] Ibid., 289.

graduate students in the same room had never worked out successfully at Harvard or elsewhere.

Finally, and even more pressing than any of the four arguments already presented, was the question of space.[14]

Space considerations were very real for Harvard's planners. Metcalf viewed the school's space requirements as fivefold:

1.) Better facilities for rare books.

2.) Cheap storage for less used books.

3.) More space for the staff.

4.) Book storage within the Yard for books that were used too often to go to the warehouse.

5.) Better facilities for undergraduates.[15]

The idea of a separate undergraduate library for Harvard grew out of this needs assessment. Although construction of a new main library building would be "the conservative thing to do,"[16] both cost and location were practical obstacles. Further, a facility to house a collection of Harvard's scope would be unwieldy in the extreme from the point of view of service. Thus, it was decided that a separate library for undergraduates would be cheaper than a new central library as well as an appropriate solution to the problems of undergraduates. On February 6, 1940, the Board of the College voted approval.

The process by which Lamont Library was funded and executed is interesting, but it is well documented elsewhere and need not concern us in detail here. What is important for us to note is the fact that Lamont was not de-

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[14] Ibid., 295-296.

[15] Ibid., 297.

[16] Keyes D. Metcalf, "Harvard Faces its Library Problems," Harvard Library Bulletin, III (Spring, 1949), 185.

veloped in a vacuum. Rather, it grew out of a particular historical context and was but one facet of a many-pronged attack on specific local considerations, viz., space, cost, and improved services, not only to undergraduates but to researchers and graduate students as well.

With no precedent to guide them, Metcalf and his collaborators set about to construct a building that would: 1.) Concentrate as far as is practicable the library service for undergraduates in a central location; 2.) make the books readily available to the students; and 3.) encourage general and recreational reading as well as assigned and collateral reading.[17] Both the critical and popular success Lamont has know may be traced back to this careful planning and to the consideration given to the needs and desires of its young charges. Location, seating capacity, reading room facilities, snack room, and toilet facilities, as well as the collection and its catalogs, were all carefully considered. The efficiency of the ventilation system, the lighting, the sound absorption qualities of the walls and ceilings, and the ease with which students could find their books and their required readings were looked upon as being of particular importance; factors upon which "the success of the building would depend."[18]

After ten years of operation, Paul H. Buck, Harvard Librarian of the period, reported that "the idea of a separate undergraduate library was sound ... and that in its physical realization Lamont "has been triumphantly successful in every detail." Lamont, he opined, had had "a striking influence on academic library policy and architecture throughout the country ..." and at Harvard had become "a vital new tool of educational policy and meth-

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[17] Ibid., 304.

[18] Ibid., 304.

ods."[19]

Of course, distinctive services had been rendered to undergraduates before the advent of Lamont. At Columbia, a separate collection of some 35,000 volumes had been set aside for their use. (It was given its own name, The Columbia College Library, although it had been housed in special rooms within the existing library.) A similar collection of some 20,000 volumes had existed at the University of Chicago during the period 1931-1949.[20] But the realization of a separate building, conceived and designed to provide the undergraduate with an environment and a collection that would serve him as a learning tool was a new and unique departure. At Harvard, a pattern had been established that would be followed by increasing numbers of both private and public universities in the coming years. Lamont proved to be "the genesis of (a) new movement."[21] Since its inception, it has "been visited constantly by Librarians and architects and has been copied in part or almost in whole by many institutions."[22] The mystique built up around Lamont was indeed considerable, Wilkerson notes, "and many of us made pilgrimage to the shrine."[23]

The undergraduate library at the University of Michigan was opened nine years later on January 18, 1958. In the words of Librarian Frederick H. Wagman, an ardent supporter of the genre, the "response of the students

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[19]Harvard University. Library. Annual Report, 1958-59, 12.

[20]Elizabeth Mills, "The Separate Undergraduate Library," College and Research Libraries, XXIX (March, 1968), 145.

[21]Ellen Hull Keever, "Reassessment of the Undergraduate Library: A Personal Critique," Southeastern Librarian, XXIII (Spring, 1973), 24.

[22]Thomas F. L'Connell, "Undergraduate Library?" Canadian Library Journal, XXVII (July-August, 1970), 278.

[23]Billy R. Wilkerson, "A Screaming Success as Study Halls," Library Journal, LXXVI (May 1, 1976), 1568.

was overwhelming and a dramatic revelation of past inadequacies.[24] Undergraduate libraries were opened at the University of South Carolina, in 1960; Princeton, in 1961; the University of Texas, in 1963; and the University of North Carolina, in 1968. On the West Coast, UCLA opened its undergraduate facility (in the existing building, while the research library moved to new quarters) in 1966; in the same year, Stanford inagurated its strikingly designed Meyer library; Berkeley's Moffitt Undergraduate Library opened in 1968. The list might be prolonged considerably, but these few examples serve to establish the ubiquitous nature and the rapidity with which these libraries were opened.

In 1956, Wagman noted that "tax-supported universities cannot fully control their enrollments," and "are facing the prospect of a tremendous increase in their campus populations within the next fifteen years."[25] The post-second world war period had been one of rapid expansion of higher educational facilities as the G.I. Bill made a college degree a realistic possibility for the first time for scores of working class youths. Yet an even greater expansion was to occur. The high postwar birth rate, Soviet space triumphs, and the funding made available to working class and "disadvantaged" students through Johnson's "war on poverty," all contributed to a period of unparalleled growth in American higher education. Of course, the educational expectations of broad strata of our society rose dramatically, in concert with the rise in undergraduate enrollment. The increase Wagman had commented upon in the mid-1950s (and which had begun in the late 1940s) con-

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[24]Frederick H. Wagman, "The Undergraduate Library of the University of Michigan," College and Research Libraries, XX (May, 1959), 186.

[25]Frederick H. Wagman, "The Case for the Undergraduate Library," College and Research Libraries, XVII (March, 1956), 151.

tinued inexorably throughout the early 1970s. A massive influx of new students, often poorly prepared by the social backgrounds from which they issued, as well as by their secondary schools, did not "fit comfortably into the complex problems of using a large research library."[26] Harvard, of course, had not had to suffer the increased enrollment its less favored sibling institutions now faced, and had based its decision to construct Lamont solely upon problems relating to the growth and dispersion of its collection. Now, the same critical threshold of size crossed earlier by Harvard had to be approached by many other major universities coincidentally with massive increases in their student populations. These factors provided, of course, major impetus for the construction of undergraduate libaries, the popularity of which grew to epidemic proportions. Undergraduate libraries even began appearing on campuses whose collections and enrollments were relatively small and whose primary emphasis was on undergraduate education. Two important features of these new libraries, both of which bear directly upon the level of service provided, are their collections and their reference service. It is to these areas that we now turn our attention.

One of our original criteria for an undergraduate library was that it have a "carefully selected core collection of books deemed important for a liberal education." Muller suggests that the need for such a selective collection "was early recognized in the establishment of reserve book collections, browsing, and other institutional collections as well as dormitory or house libraries."[27] But, Stewart points out that there is scant evidence

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[26]Jerrold Orne, "The Undergraduate Library," Library Journal, VC (June 15, 1970), 2231.

[27]Robert H. Muller, "The undergraduate Library Trend at Large Universities," Advances in Librarianship, I (1970), 113.

"that librarians have articulated the assumptions upon which undergraduate libraries are established," including the obvious one that book collections "are readily divisable into graduate and undergraduate departments ..." Universities with or considering undergraduate libraries, he suggests, would do well to define their clientele quite carefully, deciding to serve either the total undergraduate population or merely those of the "general education" college, etc. This clarification may then dictate whether a two- or four-year undergraduate institution is appropriate as well as serve to define selection policy, although the question of money, he notes somewhat plaintively, is still "sire of all selection criteria we might devise."[28]

At Harvard, the selection of materials for the Lamont collection began two years before construction of the facility commenced.[29] A sizeable portion of this initial selection was governed by a.) the reserve book collection from Widener, and b.) reading lists for undergraduate courses not currently on reserve. Lamont, however, was destined to do more than house reserve readings. A general collection designed "to satisfy intellectual curiosity" and "to aid in the preparation of papers and reports" was developed with faculty participation and from the faculty selected House collections. Charles Shaw's A List of Books for College Libraries was utilized as well, being brought up to date with selections from scholarly journals. Probable use by undergraduates was a more important criterion for selection than theoretical considerations of what might be best. The library opened

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[27]Robert H. Muller, "The Undergraduate Library Trend at Large Universities," Advances in Librarianship, I (1970), 113.

[28]Rolland C. Stewart, The Undergraduate Library Collection. (San Diego, Calif.: California University, San Diego, 1969.) Available on ERIC: Ed 043 343.

[29]Irene A. Braden, The Undergraduate Library. (Chicago: American Library Association, 1970), 15.

with a collection of 54,755 volumes, strong in the humanities and in the social sciences. Braden suggests that "the basic nature of the collection has not changed through the years," although it had grown to 142,091 volumes by 1964-1965.[30] It was not conceived of as static and an active weeding program has been carried out. The Lamont catalog was published and became a basic selection device for subsequent undergraduate libraries.[31]

Since the development of the Lamont list, the selections of the Michigan Undergraduate Library have been made available on cards and film and such selection tools as Books for College Libraries,[32] Choice, and others, have appeared. To a great degree, they have reduced dependence on the Lamont list.[33] At Berkeley's Moffitt Undergraduate Library, these selection tools are supplemented by Library Journal, The Booklist, Publisher's Weekly, The New York Times Book Review, etc., as well as by a public suggestion sheet, of which some 90% of the recommendations are acted upon favorably. Here, Books for College Libraries serves as a tool for weeding.[34] Muller states that selection at Michigan involves the routing of tools to the responsible staff who use, in addition to those items noted above, the Wilson Library Bulletin, and British Book News.[35]

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[30] Ibid., 16-17.

[31] Harvard University. Library. Lamont Library, Catalog of the Lamont Library, Harvard College.

[32] Voigt, Melvin J. and Treyz, Joseph H., Books for College Libraries, 1967. 1056 p.

[33] Melvin J. Voigt, The Undergraduate Library: The Collection and its Selection. (San Diego, Calif.: California University, San Diego, 1970). Available on ERIC: ED 042 476.

[34] Personal interview with Barbara Kornstein, Librarian, Moffitt Undergraduate Library, University of California, Berkeley.

[35] Robert H. Muller, "The Undergraduate Library Trend at Large Universities," Advances in Librarianship, I (1970), 115.

Selection in the undergraduate library appears pragmatic at best, based to a large extent, it appears, upon what was and is done at sister institutions as well as upon local considerations and requirements. In 1974, Keever surveyed thirty-two undergraduate libraries. Twenty-four disclaimed any written selection policy whatsoever and only two written statements were, in fact, turned up. (Those of Michigan and Alabama.) Twelve librarians expressed frustration in their efforts to select with undergraduate needs in mind. An overwhelming majority expressed a prediliction for Choice as the ultimate aid in the selection process, a situation which Keever suggests may lend "an appearance of pre-packaged uniformity ..." to undergraduate collections. Her respondents suggested, also, that accomplishing weeding, a necessity if one is to maintain a live and vigorous collection that is not out of date, is a major problem.[36]

While specific collection policies remain rare, generally accepted guidelines provide for a "collection that is modest in size, usually under 100,000 titles ..." (perhaps closer to 150,000 today) and "comprehensive ... well balanced, containing only introductory and basic titles, with no pretense to research."[37] Intrinsic value is often of less concern than manner of presentation, level, and relevance to specific programs. A high percentage of the additions to the collection are obvious, and there is little consistent faculty participation in collection development except through the submission of reserve lists. Practical, not theoretical, concerns appear to predominate.

A well articulated book collection policy is, of course, still a rarity

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[36]Ellen Hull Keever, "Reassessment of the Undergraduate Library: A Personal Critique," Southwestern Librarian, XXIII (Spring, 1973), 26.

[37]Jerrold Orne, "The Undergraduate Library," Library Journal, VC (June 15, 1970), 2231.

in the academic library world. If undergraduate library book selection policies are ill-defined, they are no less so than those of their elder sibling, the research library. We may take some comfort in Voigt's suggestion that the "possibility of making a sharp division of material to create an undergraduate component of the collection is not very important for the user if the undergraduate has easy access to the research collection when the smaller library fails to meet his needs."[38]

An implicit justification of undergraduate libraries is the desire to give university undergraduates the level of service faculty and graduate students are presumed to receive in the research library and which undergraduates themselves receive in the good liberal arts college library. A major element of that service is reference assistance.

Braden points out that three professional librarians originally provided reference service at Lamont, but have since been replaced by interns from Simmons Library School and by clerical staff. This simplification of service, she suggests, has "backfired," and may account for a documented decline in both circulation and reference use over the years.[39] A direct corrolation is not easily proven, of course, but Wilkinson, in a 1969 survey of the quality of reference service provided by undergraduate libraries, found that it is often "superficial and too brief," and that "we have not taken advantage of the opportunities presented by undergraduate libraries." He lays the blame squarely on the shoulders of the librarian when he suggests that:

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[38]Melvin J. Voigt, The Undergraduate Library: The Collection and its Selection. (San Diego, Calif.: California, University, San Diego, 1970), 2. Available on ERIC: ED 042 476.

[39]Irene A. Braden, The Undergraduate Library. (Chicago: American Library Association, 1970), 26.

1.) Librarians have a passive, rather than an active attitude, waiting for naive students to request service.

2.) Librarians rarely know any of the students.

3.) There is a total lack of communication between librarian and faculty concerning reference service for their students.

4.) Undergraduate libraries offer limited and unimaginative instruction programs.

5.) The large numbers of students has been used as an excuse for the failure to provide good reference services and user instruction.

6.) Too many librarians ignore their professional obligations and fail to take an active part in the teaching mission of the university, settling into clerical work which requires little thought.[40]

Not all librarians would agree with Wilkinson's assessment of their commitment or of their service. At Berkeley, Moffitt Undergraduate Librarians view reference work as "our most immediate and satisfying way of communicating with our 'users,'" and see the reference desk as "the principal starting point for undergraduates doing library research ..." Here, librarians express a strong commitment to library instruction and teach sections of Bibliography one, a three unit undergraduate library research course administered by the School of Library and Information Studies. Librarians spend "as much time as we can orienting people to resources in Moffitt, referring them to resources available elsewhere, and introducing them to basic reference and bibliographic tools and the process of systematic research."[41]

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[40]Billy R. Wilkinson, The Undergraduate Library's Public Service Record: Reference Services. (San Diego, Calif.: California University, San Diego, 1970), 27-28. Available on ERIC: ED 042 473.

[41]Ellen Meltzer and William L. Whitson, "Moffitt Library: A Commitment to Participation, UGLI Newsletter, XI (May, 1977), 12.

The educational function of the university library was outlined clearly by Swank. He foresaw "a large part of the teaching process being brought into the library," and "the library (as) no longer merely a place to read ... (but as) a workshop in which faculty, students, and librarians work together."[42] This situation does not appear to have come about in the undergraduate library, e.g. under laboratory conditions. The clarity and purpose with which the collection is selected as well as the level of reference service given remain issues in dispute, no doubt varying greatly from campus to campus. But, Wilkinson's criticism may not be lightly brushed aside. Serious research for his thesis, presented at Columbia, on reference service in undergraduate libraries led to his conclusion that these facilities may be "screaming successes as study halls," but "reference librarians are reaching few students and ... those who are reached sometimes receive poor and indifferent service."[43]

As we have seen, the undergraduate library was a response to perceived needs of undergraduate students. The materials made available in these new libraries were limited to those items which it was felt would corrolate closely with student needs, needs best satisfied, it was felt, by a manageable collection housed in attractive surroundings and staffed by librarians whose major concern it would be to aid the undergraduate, not his more elevated graduate and faculty brethren. It was hoped, also, that this arrangement would provide the faculty with the opportunity of moving away, should they wish, from the textbook and lecture mode of teaching. A definitive assessment of

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[42]Raynard C. Swank, "The Educational Function of the University Library," Library Trends, I (July, 1952), 39.

[43]Billy R. Wilkinson, "A Screaming Success as Study Halls," Library Journal, VC (May 1, 1971), 1571.

how well the undergraduate library has performed the tasks it has set for itself has yet to be made. However, we have looked at two important areas, book selection and reference service. Both areas, particularly the latter, appear to leave something to be desired.

We will now briefly review other criticism of the undergraduate library, recently grown rather intense, and then attempt a limited assessment of tne place of these institutions in the academic community of the future.

As early as 1953, Dix had raised a solitary voice of protest to what then threatened to become a trend, questioning whether "in the small libraries in the smaller universities ... any very special treatment of the undergraduate is really necessary." In his opinion the undergraduate "should be constantly confronted by books a little beyond his grasp," and special facilities would not be needed if a "little care and planning" went into keeping the undergraduate from becoming lost "in working with a unified collection numbering not more than, say, a half million volumes."[44]

A former Acting Librarian of Lamont was moved to write against the concept of undergraduate libraries in 1970, questioning whether undergraduate students today may be viewed, in fact, as "a whole and distinguishable segment of our academic society at all the same and that the beginning level of scholarship." He expressed concern that "university librarians have created and are extending in the very centre of our academic efforts an institution ... which may be based on an artificial concept of the possibility of segregating one part of the academic community.[45]

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[44]William S. Dix, "Undergraduate Libraries," College and Research Libraries, XIV (July, 1953), 271.

[45]Thomas F. O'Connell, "Undergraduate Library?" Canadian Library Journal, XXVII (July-August, 1970), 278.

Perhaps the most damning critique of the undergraduate library, however, is that of Ellen Hull Keever.[46] Writing in 1973, she points out that "eleven existent undergraduate libraries are being abandoned for diverse reasons," including those at South Carolina, Boston University, Syracuse, Cleveland State, and Miami University, Oxford, Ohio. In related moves, numerous planning committees have abandoned efforts to construct such facilities, e.g. the University of Cincinnati, Wayne State, etc.[47] She notes, too, a "vacillation in commitment," on the part of some of the undergraduate librarians she had surveyed. These disaffected members of the profession had come to question the premise that the library skills learned in the undergraduate library transfer readily to the research library. Those of this persuasion, she suggests, view the superior undergraduate as "deprived, the frankly average student as spoon-fed."[48]

Much of the foregoing criticism appears to be well taken. However, the triad of space, size, and complexity requires solutions to the problems it dictates. Under appropriate conditions, the undergraduate library appears to be one such solution. What, then, is the criteria upon which a considered decision to build an undergraduate library may be based? We will recall that in 1953, Dix had suggested that undergraduate libraries were inappropriate to campuses with library collections of less than half a million volumes. By 1956, he had revised this initial estimate, if not his basic premise. He still viewed "any system which permits students to use anything less than the total collection (as) just a bit foolish," as long as the size

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[46] Ellen Hull Keever, "Reassessment of the Undergraduate Library: A Personal Critique," Southeastern Librarian, XXIII (Spring, 1973), 24-30.

[47] Ibid., 25.

[48] Ibid., 26.

of the collection remained "within reason ... Today, based upon my own experience, I'll interpret 'within reason' to be less than a million and a half volumes."[49]

Dix was foresighted in his assessment of size as critical in determining the need for an undergraduate library. However, by itself, it is a far from adequate assessment of the many factors that must be taken into account. In sum, it appears that undergraduate libraries as we have defined them are justifiable only on very large research-oriented campuses with a heavy emphasis upon graduate education and a heterogeneous student population. Even then, the size and nature of the undergraduate population, the ratio of graduates to undergraduates, and the nature of the existing library facilities, must be taken into account. A plan to construct a separately housed undergraduate library should be validated only after a careful assessment of all these factors and the interplay between them indicate strongly an affirmative decision is warranted. We suggest, also, that no theoretical justifications have been advanced which, in themselves, are adequate criteria for the construction of such a facility. Smaller campuses, particularly, should view their requirements pragmatically and search out the solution to their own undergraduate needs in terms of their own unique contexts.

In the final analysis, we are left with more of a muddle than a mystery. Complexity born of size, one of the few compelling rationalizations for the segregation and special treatment of undergraduates in our academic library systems, can only increase. The automation of bibliographic record keeping will further specialize an already complex system while it risks eroding

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[49] William S. Dix, "Undergraduates do not Necessarily Require a Special Facility," College and Research Libraries, XVII (March, 1956), 148-149.

the humane values of our institutions. Yet, while a primary justification for undergraduate libraries becomes more pressing, the potential for their realization and continued support diminishes. As our society enters the 1980s, pessimism over the practical value of an academic degree is confirmed by an economic outlook that grows increasingly bleak. The mounting distrust of our institutions, including our colleges and our universities, translates into lack of support. We are left to speculate that the rapid expansion and the period of growth enjoyed by undergraduates libraries, indeed, by higher education in general, in the 1960s and early 1970s, will not continue.

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